United Nations A/67/581

General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 November 2012

Original: English

Sixty-seventh session
Agenda item 121 (j)
Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations: cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization

Letter dated 14 November 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with instructions received from the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, I have the honour to submit herewith the Baku Declaration adopted at the 12th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization, held in Baku on 16 October 2012 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under the agenda item 121 (j).

(*Signed*) Agshin **Mehdiyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 14 November 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Twelfth Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization

Baku Declaration, 2012

(Baku, 16 October 2012)

The 12th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) was held in Baku on 16 October 2012. The meeting was presided by H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and attended by:

H.E. Mr. Hamid Karzai
President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadi Nejad
President of the Islamic Republic of Iran

H.E. Mr. Asif Ali Zardari
President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon
President of the Republic of Tajikistan

H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan
Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey

H.E. Mr. Ilgizar Sobirov
Chairman of the Senate of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan

H.E. Mr. Askar Zhumagaliyev
Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Kazakhstan

H.E. Mr. Erlan Abdyldaev
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic

The Heads of State/Government/delegation had an in-depth exchange of views on important regional and global issues of common interest with a view to promoting the socioeconomic well-being of the peoples of the ECO region in a cordial and friendly atmosphere. They also reviewed the performance/progress made by ECO during the last two decades towards achieving its aims, objectives and principles as envisaged in the Treaty of Izmir, taking into account the political, social, technological and economic developments that took place in the region as well as in the world, defined policy guidelines to be followed and emphasized that continued peace, stability and security in the region were prerequisites for attaining ECO goals and objectives. In this context, the Heads of State/Government/delegation,

Bearing in mind the goals and objectives of ECO as set forth in the Treaty of Izmir as well as the declarations and communiqués of previous Summits,

Reaffirming their resolve to enhance efforts towards improved economic cooperation, social welfare, quality of life, economic growth and sustainable development in the ECO region,

Reiterating the strong political will of the member States towards strengthening regional cooperation within the framework of the Economic Cooperation Organization,

Expressing concern about the existing unresolved conflicts in the ECO region, particularly the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which impedes the development of economic cooperation on the regional level as well as the broader level, and stressing the importance of making increased efforts for the earliest resolution of this conflict within the territorial integrity, sovereignty and the internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan,

Expressing concern at the unilateral coercive economic sanctions, which hinder economic development, cooperation, freedom of commerce and trade essential for friendship among nations, including regional cooperation within the ECO region,

Acknowledging the importance of regional cooperation, welcoming and supporting the progress achieved in the Istanbul Process "Heart of Asia" on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan, and in this regard reiterating their further support for the implementation of the seven priority confidence-building measures,

Recalling the major international conferences since their last Summit, including the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul in May 2011, Rio+20 in June 2012 as well as the Sixteenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Tehran in August 2012, and other relevant international and regional conferences,

Reiterating the importance of implementing the key ECO agreements for achieving ECO goals and objectives,

Appreciating actions taken to implement the ECO projects/programmes in advancement of the initiatives which would further strengthen ECO as an effective organization for regional economic cooperation, and encouraging further actions to this end,

1. *Appreciated* the work done by the Council of Ministers at its 20th Meeting, held on 15 October 2012, endorsed its report and instructed the Secretary-General to ensure its full implementation;

2. *Welcomed* the positive developments during the "Treaty Event" organized in the framework of the 20th Meeting of the Council of Ministers;

3. *Invited* the member States to consider the possibility of signing/ratifying the remaining ECO agreements;

4. *Expressed* their satisfaction with the successful holding of the Fourth ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade, held in Kabul in 2011, and invited the States members of the Economic Cooperation Organization to take all necessary measures to implement the decisions of the Ministerial Meeting;

5. *Underlined* the need for achieving a substantial increase in intra-ECO trade and the share of the ECO region in world trade by the gradual reduction and removal, to the extent possible, of the tariff and non-tariff barriers;

6. *Renewed* their commitment for the implementation of the ECO Trade Agreement by the contracting parties, emphasized the need for operationalizing the Agreement by 1 January 2013, as reflected in the report of the Third Meeting of the ECO Trade Agreement Cooperation Council, and invited the remaining member States to accede to the Agreement;

7. *Reaffirmed* their commitment to support the accession of the member States to the World Trade Organization;

8. *Appreciated* the role played by the ECO Trade and Development Bank, urged the strengthening of its financial capacity to meet the growing demand for economic exchange and expansion of the scope of the Bank's activities in the ECO region, called upon the remaining member States to consider joining the Bank, and welcomed the signing by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Republic of Azerbaijan of the Articles of Agreement of the Bank;

9. *Reiterated* the importance of early operationalization of the ECO Reinsurance Company, and called upon the contracting parties to attach high priority to expedite all the required procedures in order to establish the Company;

10. *Acknowledged* the significant role of the private sector as an engine of growth and economic development in the region, and called upon the ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry to enhance its role in cooperation with the private sector of the States members of the Economic Cooperation Organization;

11. *Expressed* their satisfaction about the successful holding of the Eighth ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport and Communications, held in Ashgabat in June 2011, and urged the States members of the Economic Cooperation Organization to take all necessary measures to implement the decisions of the Ministerial Meeting;

12. *Welcomed* the establishment of road corridors along Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran and Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul, called for establishing additional ECO road corridors, and recognizing the progress in the Uzen-Bereket-Gorgan and Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway Projects, called for faster implementation of the rail projects along Qazvin-Rasht-Astara (Iran)-Astara (Azerbaijan), Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China and Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran-Turkey, and early removal of the existing obstacles to the smooth operation of the Bandar Abbas-Almaty, Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul and Istanbul-Almaty rail corridors;

13. *Recognized* the importance of regional cooperation in information and communications technology by developing projects and programmes, and in this regard noted the forthcoming Ministerial Meeting on information and communications technology;

14. *Invited* the international and regional funding institutions and the member States to participate in financing and implementing the ECO Railway Network Development Plan, which was prepared under the aegis of the Joint ECO/Islamic Development Bank Project on the Transit Transport Framework Agreement and adopted by the 11th Meeting of the Heads of Economic Cooperation Organization Railway Authorities, held in Ankara in June 2012, and also called upon the Secretariat to expedite preparation of the road, maritime and customs transit development plans;

15. *Invited* the member States to address the existing obstacles, including infrastructural, administrative, customs, transit, tariff and security obstacles facing operationalization of all established road and rail corridors, where possible;

16. *Acknowledged* the importance of cooperation in the energy sector among the member States for the development of their economies, and called upon the Third ECO Ministerial Meeting on Energy, to be held in Tehran, to consider relevant initiatives in this regard;

17. *Acknowledged* also the vast potential of the ECO region in the field of renewable sources of energy and its importance for sustainable development, the increase of energy productivity and efficiency, as well as cleaner energy production;

18. *Reaffirmed* the right of all countries to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes;

19. *Expressed* their satisfaction about the successful holding of the Fourth ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment in Tehran in June 2011, and appreciated the adoption of the Framework Plan of Action on Environmental Cooperation and Global Warming in the ECO region for the period 2011-2015, and urged the environmental organizations of member States to consider the possibility of extending their technical and financial support for its implementation;

20. *Noted* the increased concerns of the member States about food security, which is one of the major challenges at the global level, emphasized the importance of ensuring food security in the region, and supported the efforts of the Republic of Turkey for the establishment of the Regional Coordination Centre, to be inaugurated at the Fifth ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture, to be held in Antalya in November 2012, for the implementation of the regional programme for food security;

21. *Emphasized* the importance of strengthening cooperation among the States members of the Economic Cooperation Organization in the field of industry, especially in standardization and the development of small and medium-size enterprises to enhance productivity in the member States and facilitate the trade of goods in the region, and requested the member States to expedite the signing/ratification of the Statute of the Regional Institute for Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology (RISCAM) for its early operationalization;

22. *Acknowledged* the crucial role of tourism for strengthening cultural affinities and enhancing trade and the spirit of solidarity in the region, and decided to facilitate the movement of tourists and conduct joint events and studies for the promotion of tourism in the ECO region;

23. *Appreciated* the progress made through the Comprehensive Plan of Action for the Enhancement of the External Relations of ECO to strengthen its ties with the United Nations system and regional and international organizations, keeping in view the provisions of the Treaty of Izmir and previous high-level decisions;

24. *Appreciated* the ECO Cultural Institute for its contributions to the enhanced cultural cooperation in the ECO region, and invited the remaining signatories to ratify its charter;

25. *Appreciated* the operationalization of the ECO Science Foundation in Islamabad, aimed at fostering regional cooperation in science and technology among the member States, and invited the remaining member States to sign/ratify its charter;

26. *Appreciated* the operationalization of the ECO Educational Institute in Ankara, aimed at fostering regional cooperation in education, invited the member States to kindly initiate follow-up actions on the provisions of the charter of the Educational Institute, and invited the remaining member States to sign/ratify its charter;

27. *Acknowledged* the need for strengthening cooperation on essential issues that are at the centre of the sustainable human resources development in the ECO region, with a special focus on education, and reaffirmed their commitment towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the ECO region, particularly health-related Millennium Development Goals to reduce child mortality, improve maternal health and combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;

28. *Recognized* the need to strengthen the work of the Regional Centre for Disaster Risk Management in Mashhad, and encouraged it to develop, in consultation with the Secretariat, a coordinated regional approach for effective cooperation among the member States in this field;

29. *Noted with satisfaction* progress in the implementation of the European Union-funded project entitled "Fight against trafficking from/to Afghanistan with the ECO member States";

30. *Expressed their satisfaction* about the successful holding of the Third ECO Interior Ministers Meeting, held in Istanbul in December 2010, and its outcomes, and called upon interested member States to take the necessary measures for the establishment of ECOPOL;

31. *Reaffirmed* their commitment to render all necessary support to enhance public-private partnerships in the ECO region;

32. *Welcomed* the initiative by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Economic Cooperation Organization, and expressed the hope that the Assembly would enable the ECO Parliaments to support the activities/programmes of ECO through necessary legislative measures;

33. *Appreciated* the work done by the Eminent Persons Group established on the initiative of the Republic of Turkey, which undertook a performance appraisal of the Organization, identified major challenges and recommended ways to improve ECO efficiency, dynamism and visibility;

34. *Appreciated* the contribution of the former Secretary-General, H.E. M. Yahya Maroofi, to the Organization, welcomed the appointment of H.E. Dr. Shamil Aleskerov as the new ECO Secretary-General, and expressed confidence that he would effectively contribute to the enhancement and acceleration of regional cooperation, take appropriate initiatives to that end and promote the projection of the image and activities of the Economic Cooperation Organization;

35. *Underlined* the importance of timely payments by the member States of their mandatory budgetary contributions to ensure the efficient, effective and results-based functioning of the Organization;

36. *Emphasized* the importance of effective monitoring and follow-up, by member States and the Secretariat, of ECO projects and regional programmes to ensure their timely implementation and operationalization;

37. *Welcomed* the appointments of Mr. Iftikhar Hussain Arif, effective from 5 April 2013, as the new President of the ECO Cultural Institute, Mr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro as President of the ECO Science Foundation, Mr. Selahattin Turan as President of the ECO Educational Institute and Mrs. Atousa Goudarzi as the Dean of the ECO College of Insurance;

38. *Welcomed* the endorsement by the Council of the observer status to the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States, the future relationship of which would be governed by ECO Modalities for Granting Observer/Dialogue Partnership Status;

39. *Noted* the attendance of the delegation of Turkmenistan at the 12th Summit of ECO and its support to ECO;

40. *Expressed* their special thanks to the Republic of Turkey for holding the chairmanship of ECO from December 2010 to October 2012 in a very efficient way;

41. *Welcomed* the offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the 13th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization in Islamabad in 2014;

42. *Welcomed* the offer of the Republic of Tajikistan to host the 21st Meeting of the Council of Ministers in Dushanbe in 2013;

43. *Expressed* their profound thanks for the sagacious manner in which H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, led the deliberations of the 12th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization to a successful conclusion and expressed their sincere gratitude to the Government and the people of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for the Summit.